

Christmas in the Benz by flippyspoon

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Summary:

Steve escapes a crappy Harrington Christmas only to find another crappy Christmas refugee.

Christmas in the Benz

“Wonderful Christmastime” was on the radio but it reminded Steve too much of Nancy because she loved Paul McCartney, and he was miserable enough so he switched the station and got “O Holy Night.” Steve sighed and drove slowly down the icy road and puffed on a cigar.

He’d never smoked a cigar before, but on anger-fueled impulse he’d ditched the ostensibly merry Harrington family Christmas at the house after opening his present while his parents drank wine and laughed at something some cousin was saying. The house had been full of Harringtons and the Harrington-adjacent. Steve barely knew any of them and many not at all. Three people had mistook him for somebody else’s son. His parents mostly ignored him. He was less than an afterthought.

And then the present...

He’d grabbed his present, cigars, a bottle of brandy, and a giant gift basket sent to his father from some law firm before “borrowing” the Mercedes. He’d nearly choked to death at first, not realizing you weren’t supposed to inhale. The cigar was awful, but it was an expensive thing he’d stolen from his father so he smoked it on principle.

So Steve puffed, his thoughts gloomy, as he crept along in his father’s silver Mercedes and, spotting a lone figure walking on the side of the road in the falling snow he slowed, and recognizing a messy head of blonde hair he smiled around his father’s stupid cigar.

Billy Hargrove had given Steve a blow-job four days ago.

To say that Steve had not expected this turn of events was a gross understatement.

It happened at Lisa Fowler’s Christmas party just a week after the Snow Ball. Steve had actually been having an okay time, getting buzzed and dancing with girls he wasn’t particularly interested in. He’d gone outside to get some air and have a cigarette, bundled up

behind the Fowler's snow covered garage when Billy Hargrove came over and offered him a beer.

All Billy had opened with was, "Hey, Harrington. You look better."

Steve couldn't remember the details of the conversation, only that Billy had seemed kind of upset and apologetic and then they'd started talking about basketball. He did remember the part where Billy had started rambling about Steve's strengths on the court, clutching his elbow. He definitely remembered the way Billy's hand traveled up his arm as he spoke and somehow ended up at Steve's neck, and he especially remembered how close Billy had been standing and the tension in the chilly air--that moment of stormy electricity--before they'd abruptly started making out. Billy had pulled Steve into the Fowler's garage and dropped to his knees. It hadn't even been awkward afterward. Billy had just tossed him a nod and a grin after Steve had come harder than he had in ages. He'd started to wonder if that was always the way Billy Hargrove apologized to people.

Steve rolled his window down and eased up beside Billy on the road. "Hey, Hargrove!"

Billy looked down at him and Steve saw him register surprise and then bemusement. He was also shuddering from the cold.

"Hey, H-Harrington," Billy said.

"What're you doing?" Steve said.

"I'm d-driving the I-Indy 500," Billy said, teeth chattering. "W-what's it l-look like?"

"It looks like you're walking alone in the snow on Christmas about three miles from your house," Steve said, puffing on his cigar. "Also looks like you're freezing your ass off."

Billy crossed his arms, hiding his hands in his pits. He was wearing his leather jacket but he still wasn't dressed nearly warm enough; a Metallica t-shirt over a thermal from what Steve could tell. "W-what the hell do y-you want, Harrington?"

"Get in," Steve said, and pulled to a stop. The road was deserted.

Nobody else was out on Christmas.

Billy stopped walking and glared down at him, pretending he wasn't shivering. "Why? W-what're you d-doing?"

"I'm gonna throw a VCR into the quarry," Steve said, tapping ash from his cigar.

"Y-you're gonna w-what-"

"Jesus. Hargrove, you're going to get hypothermia." Steve reached into the backseat of his father's Mercedes and produced a giant bottle of brandy. "I got top shelf booze and a shit load of food. Get in the car before you start losing fingers."

Billy frowned at him, stared down the road for a long shuddering second, and finally walked around to the passenger side and got in the car. Steve tossed the brandy in the backseat and rolled his window up and cranked the heat. Billy huffed into his hands, rubbing them together. Steve was wearing a number of layers plus a parka, and now he took it off and tossed it over to Billy who was apparently too cold for pride and huddled under it, the furry collar up around his chin.

"No gloves?" Steve said. "Are you serious?"

"I d-didn't think I'd need them," Billy said. He closed his eyes, getting up close to the heater under his parka blanket, stomping his feet a little. He looked adorable, Steve thought. Steve hit the gas and headed towards the quarry, watching Billy as he puffed on his cigar. "Oh God, that's better," Billy murmured. "Christ."

Steve reached into the back again as he drove and grabbed the bottle of brandy, handing it off to Billy. "Drink a little. It'll warm you up."

"You're a wild man," Billy said. He uncapped the bottle with a little bit of struggling and took a long swallow, sighing in relief. "Oh, that's good."

"Must be the Christmas spirit," Steve said. "Makes me so fucking festive."

“Where are we going?”

“Toldja. We’re going to go throw a VCR into the quarry.”

“Harrington,” Billy said. “Have you lost your shit? And what’s with the cigar?”

“You want to try it?” Steve held out the cigar and Billy took it and gave it a puff. “They’re my dad’s.”

“I guess the Benz is your dad’s too,” Billy said.

“Yep.”

“Cigars and brandy in the Benz,” Billy said wryly. “Did I die back there?”

“Maybe,” Steve said. He pulled off onto a side road to a nice hidden spot overlooking the quarry where he’d used to park with Nance.

“So what,” Billy said. “You just take off on the Harrington tribe? Shouldn’t you be drinking eggnog and singing around a piano with a bunch of rich people in ugly sweaters, drooling over your mom’s new tennis bracelet or something?”

“They can do that just fine without me,” Steve grumbled. The quarry was iced over and the woods were blanketed in white. Enough people came up to the spot even in winter that the snow wasn’t high and it wasn’t hard to find a little clearing overlooking the ice and park. Steve pulled the break and huffed, grabbing the bottle of brandy from Billy and taking a swallow. “What about you? What’re you doing wandering in the snow like the Little Match Girl?”

Billy tittered at that but he stared out the window and puffed on the cigar once, giving it a dirty look, before handing it back over to Steve. “I sat there and played nice family for two hours,” Billy said flatly. “Had to get out. But my dad had my keys.”

Steve didn’t have a totally clear picture of Billy’s homelife. He’d heard a rumor though from someone at school that Billy Hargrove’s dad was a hardass who beat the hell out of him. He’d kind of hated how much sense that made. But Steve didn’t much feel like poking at

that even if Billy was dropping hints about it. That kind of shit got touchy. The truth was, he was feeling desperately lonely on this particular Christmas and he didn't want to make Billy go away, especially since he was getting the feeling that Billy was as desperately lonely as he was.

"Did you get anything good for Christmas?" Steve said lightly, puffing away but not particularly enjoying the cigar. He cracked a window just a little for the smoke to escape.

Billy lit a cigarette and said, "Max got me a Metallica B-side I didn't have. That was cool of her. I got her a *Star Wars* t-shirt at the last minute." He said it so quietly that Steve barely heard him and then he grimaced at Steve, looking ugly. "My dad got me shoes I wouldn't be caught dead in. And a belt. Thought he was trying to say something but..."

"Say something?" Steve said.

"Nevermind. You?"

"The VCR," Steve said. "And a series of checks from relatives."

"A VCR and cash," Billy said, and snorted a laugh. "Wow, I can see why you're so upset. How terrible for you."

"Yeah," Steve said, and took a sip of brandy.

"And you're throwing the VCR in the quarry," Billy said, stroking his chin and taking a drag. "Alright. Let me see if I can guess. Daddy Harrington is screwing his secretary and it just upsets your pure sweet Steve Harrington heart so much—"

"Pffft." Steve smirked at Billy. "My dad's been screwing his secretary forever. That's old news. Pretty sure she's not the only one either. Look, you wouldn't get it and I'd just sound like an asshole if I tried to explain it. Are you hungry?"

"Starved."

Steve twisted around and dove into the backseat, digging through the giant rattan gift basket he'd liberated from his father's study. He

grabbed packs of water crackers and chestnuts and jars of jam and pate and tossed them back at Billy, who fumbled as he caught them, his cigarette almost dropping from his mouth.

Steve frowned at a jar and said, "Do you like artichoke pesto?"

"I dunno," Billy muttered, and caught another vacuum sealed package. "Oh shit...well, I like salmon. What is all this?"

"Firms send em' to my dad at Christmas," Steve said. "He gets tons of this stuff. He won't even notice I took it." The basket included a bottle of sparkling cider and they drank it with their eats to chase the brandy. Steve turned on the radio and switched to a rock station and it was *nice* to sit in the luxury of the warm Benz looking out on the snow, eating overpriced gourmet shit and listening to Van Halen.

Steve watched Billy spread pesto on a melba toast with the little crystal handled butter knife included in the basket. There was something endearing about that.

"What's your old man do anyway?" Billy said.

"Finance," Steve said reflexively.

"Like stocks and shit?" Billy said.

"I guess so," Steve said.

"Aren't you planning on working for him after you graduate?" Billy said.

"Yeah, well..." Steve gaped at him. How on earth did Billy Hargrove know that?"

"Might want to figure out what you're going to be doing for a living, Harrington," Billy said, and tossed the melba toast in his mouth.

"What're you going to do after you graduate?" Steve said.

"No fuckin' idea," Billy said with a snort. "Get a job, save up some cash and get the fuck out of here, I guess."

"Sounds like a plan," Steve said, and rooted around in the basket until- "Aha! You like caviar?"

"Caviar?" Billy said. "You're shitting me."

Steve sat back and held up the jar with flourish. "Over a hundred bucks an ounce."

"Christ."

Steve opened the jar and scooped a little bit out on his finger and was about to try it when he smiled at Billy and said, "Where are my manners? You're my guest. I'll feed you."

Billy looked mildly startled but the corner of his mouth turned up into a grin and he said, "Harrington..."

Steve pressed a caviar'd finger to Billy's lips. "C'mon," Steve said softly. "Hundred bucks an ounce?" He watched Billy still in his seat, his wary eyes on Steve, who would've expected him to be *into* it in his usual lascivious way, but instead he looked frozen as he stared back and his lips parted slightly. Steve was transfixed as he prodded Billy's mouth open and pressed his finger to Billy's tongue, a few stray fish eggs dotting his bottom lip. "How are you acting all shy now?" Steve said, painting Billy's tongue with caviar. "You were blowing me four days ago."

Billy answered by closing his mouth around Steve's finger and sucking down the caviar.

"Oh..." Steve bit his lip and Billy let his finger go. "Do you like it?" He scooped out a little more with two fingers this time.

Billy only said, "Hmm." Steve watched his chest rise and fall, the parka around his waist. His t-shirt and thermal were tight across his chest. Steve wanted to bite his neck. Billy opened his mouth willingly for Steve. He *sucked* and his tongue curled between Steve's fingers, lapping up the hundred bucks an ounce fish eggs, his cheeks hollowing out. Billy grabbed Steve's wrist and looked up at him, taking more fingers in his mouth and then nibbling on the flesh under Steve's thumb and sucking a kiss to his wrist. Steve was hard in his

jeans and he pressed a hand to Billy's stomach. He was about to go for Billy's belt buckle when Billy took Steve's wrist and kissed it again, softly this time, and turned his head to kiss Steve's palm. He paused there to look at Steve's hand as if it might be more interesting than the promise of sex. And something struck Steve about that because Billy almost looked sad and that wasn't right. Billy was lewd and when he'd blown Steve he'd seemed loose and careless about the whole thing.

"Shit," Steve whispered. "You like me."

Billy shoved his hand away like it had just caught fire, his face red. "No, I don't."

"Pfft." It would figure that Billy would make himself this obvious when he felt strongly about something. He was an emotional guy, clearly. "You like me a lot," Steve said, almost confused by the notion.

"Just shut the fuck up, Harrington," Billy snapped. "Don't flatter yourself."

"I mean... I thought you were about to propose to my hand just now-"

"Fuck." Billy went for the door handle and Steve grabbed his arm.

"Wait! Geez, you're like a spooked deer."

Billy wouldn't look at him, staring resolutely out the window as he yanked his arm back. "Yeah, Billy Hargrove's got a crush on Steve fuckin' Harrington," Billy said bitterly. "Real funny joke, huh?"

"Am I laughing?" Steve said.

They sat in an awkward silence during which Steve considered Billy Hargrove; how he'd been quiet since the fight, had been genuinely apologetic at the party, how funny and charming he could be, the rumors that swirled around him concerning his father...

"It's not out of the question," Steve said.

"Don't *play* with me," Billy said. "I'm not an idiot."

Steve rolled his eyes and grabbed the parka off Billy's lap and threw it in the backseat and with a bit of struggle, straddled Billy, hunched over him a little awkwardly. Billy stiffened, staring at him with wide eyes, and Steve tipped his chin up.

He was beautiful, Steve thought, and much more beautiful like this when he wasn't full of shit.

"I'm liking you a lot right now," Steve said. "If you want to know the truth. I'm having a good time. Aren't you?"

"Y-yeah but that doesn't mean--"

"You ever stop talking, man?" Steve murmured, and kissed him.

Billy, despite his apprehension, responded aggressively, plunging his tongue into Steve's mouth and pulling him closer by a fistful of sweater and Steve laughed a little and pushed him back. Billy was breathless and he froze up again and Steve rested a reassuring hand on his neck.

"Hey," Steve said, and kissed his cheek. "There's no rush. And you don't have to prove anything. Just..." He cradled Billy's cheeks in his palms and kissed him once softly and kissed the corner of his mouth, his bottom lip, his top lip---gentle, sweet, what he considered sensual--and heard Billy's little breaths, saw his crystal blue eyes gaze at him, helpless. "Like this," he whispered. "S'good like this, right?"

"Yeah..."

He nudged Billy's mouth open with his thumb and kissed his top lip again and leaned back a little just to look at him, the way he crumbled a little and waited, and Steve kissed his bottom lip slowly and licked a little line under his mouth, Billy's arms coming up around him, as he took what Steve gave him.

Steve warmed the kissing up by degrees, sucking on Billy's bottom lip and teasing Billy's tongue with his own. He stopped and pulled off his thick sweater and his button-up and tossed them in the backseat.

Billy looked at him like he'd never seen a half-naked boy before, and

traced a line down Steve's throat to his chest and followed it with his lips and his tongue and Steve sighed and tangled his hands in Billy's hair. He felt Billy hard in his jeans under him and he rocked with him and nibbled on Billy's earlobe and felt his blood hot at the sensation of their clothed cocks grinding against each other. Billy's hands came up around his back and he raked his nails lightly. Steve pushed his hands back and shoved Billy's jacket off his shoulders and Billy struggled half-frantic to get out of it, throwing it over his shoulder.

Billy was sucking a hickey at Steve's collarbone and Steve said, "Ah! That's good. You're so good, you're so..."

They rocked harder together, the friction a little infuriating, and Billy's breath came fast and then he cried out and shuddered and Steve held him there and kissed his hair and stifled a chuckle in sheer delight as Billy came down, holding Steve close, his hands hot on Steve's back.

"*Fuck*," Billy muttered. "I didn't know I was gonna..."

"It's okay," Steve said, and kissed him. "Hey, it's okay, it's good."

Steve cooled the kissing back down, fascinated by the way Billy let him lead, he wouldn't have thought it but Billy seemed more than happy to let Steve lazily explore every little inch of his throat and to run up his shirt and press his fingers to the hard muscles of Billy's stomach and then the relative softness of his hips. Billy's body was so much thicker and denser than he was used to. It was a turn on. He kissed a line from Billy's stomach up to his heart and absently shoved the t-shirt and then the thermal over Billy's head, hearing him snort a chuckle as he struggled to take them off.

Steve sat back and then lurched forward and gave him a searing kiss; Billy's hot tongue licking his lip, and it did make him, for just a half a second, forget where he was and how he had come to be there and that it was Christmas. For just one fleeting moment, he thought he was in a dream.

"Harrington..." Billy whispered and looked at him and took a little lick at his mouth. "Ah..." Billy went for Steve's fly and then his cock

was in Billy's hand and Steve's head dropped. He nuzzled Billy's neck.

"Fuck," Steve said. He gripped Billy's shoulders. He was leaking a little but it would be too dry for what he had in mind. "Hold on..." He leaned around Billy, reaching into the gift basket, rummaging around, hard and frustrated, until he found- "Ah! Perfect!"

"Truffle oil?" Billy said. Steve handed him the trapezoid-shaped bottle and sat back to unbuckle Billy's belt. He unzipped the fly and found Billy getting hard again already. "You want to put truffle oil on our dicks?" Billy said.

"Sure, why not." Steve reached over to the seat lever and pulled it, watching Billy's eyebrows shoot up in surprise as the seat went back so they were half laying down.

"The fuck..."

Steve's hand shook as he grabbed the bottle away and uncapped it and sloppily spilled oil on his cock. He fumbled as he capped the bottle, spilling on Billy's chest before he tossed it in the back seat. He sat forward and held his cock and Billy's in his hand and stroked once.

Billy said, "*Oh...*"

Billy's larger hand met his and he stroked their cocks together, slick with oil. The car smelled like they were making risotto but Steve didn't much care about that as he crouched over Billy, their lips absently brushing as he fucked into Billy's hand. Billy's cock was hard and hot and slick next to his and Steve slid an oily hand up Billy's chest as he kissed him. He gripped Billy's shoulders, letting him do the work of bringing them off and he pressed his mouth to Billy's cheek and felt hot breath along his neck. He licked inside Billy's mouth, felt Billy tug at his hair and he moaned. Billy arched and thrust into his own hand.

"Billy..."

Billy looked right at him, seeming surprised suddenly and Steve said

again, “Billy...”

Steve kissed him as he rocked into Billy’s hand and said, “Billy...Billy...”

“You’re fucking perfect,” Billy mumbled against his mouth and then all at once Steve quivered with the white heat of pleasure and came on Billy’s chest and Billy’s stroked him until he flinched at the sensitivity and he held Billy’s cock in his hand even as he still shivered. “I...I’d like to fuck you sometime,” Steve whispered and Billy gripped his hips hard enough to bruise as he came again in angry little ropes of white. He kissed Billy’s sweaty brow as Steve kept stroking him slowly until Billy pushed his hand away and tugged him into a kiss before Steve collapsed on top of him.

They were disgusting.

Steve laid his head on Billy’s slick and sticky chest and said, “We’re...we’re covered in truffle oil and cum.”

Billy laughed at that and Steve felt the rumble of it under him.

When they finally felt like moving, Steve opened the car door and stumbled outside.

“What are you doing!” Billy said.

Steve grit his teeth, shirtless in the harsh cold, and grabbing a handful of snow, he sluiced his stomach and chest with it until he felt slightly less gross. “Cleaning up. FUCK.” Just as quickly he raced around to the driver’s side and got back in, crossing his arms over his chilled body. “Fuck fuck.”

Billy followed suit and then they were shuddering in the Benz, blasting the heater, laughing. Steve grabbed Billy’s Metallica t-shirt and put it on. It’s smelled like Billy. Steve liked that.

“What am I gonna wear?” Billy said. Steve tossed him his own thermal. “You can borrow the parka when we go outside.”

“Gee thanks.”

Steve grinned at him and they smoked cigarettes and listened to The

Rolling Stones until Steve said, "I guess it's time to toss the VCR. Unless you want it. You can have it, if you want it."

"Heh." Billy took a drag and smiled wryly. "Real sweet of you, but my dad would just hassle me about it. He'd think I stole it or something. And I don't even have a TV in my room."

"I could *tell* him-"

"No!" Billy shot him a hard look. "No. Let's not get you anywhere near my old man. Alright?"

"Okay," Steve said. "Listen... How bad is it? With you and your dad?"

Billy shook his head and said, "Don't ask."

"Right."

"So what's the deal with the VCR then?" Billy said. "You wanted a Panasonic and they got you a Zenith or what?"

"No," Steve said. "I have one already. The same exact one. That they bought me."

"I don't get it," Billy said, exhaling a plume of smoke. "Why'd they buy you the same VCR twice? Don't tell me you have two TVs."

"No." Steve stared out at the ice, and felt ridiculous. His complaints seemed shitty and meaningless when Billy probably got hit in the face on the regular. "It doesn't matter."

"They forgot they already bought it for you," Billy said.

"Not exactly. Look, it doesn't-"

"*They*...didn't buy it for you," Billy said slowly.

Steve sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. "Look. Seriously. Forget it. I know it's a bullshit thing to-"

"What is it," Billy said, still pushing. "Is it like your dad's secretary

who he's banging buys you something?"

Steve chewed his lip and looked out on the ice and wondered if it was warmer or colder than his parents on a given day.

"Yeah," Steve said. "She does."

"Huh. Your mom doesn't even—"

"Her job is to remind my dad," Steve said. "Or maybe his secretary reminds him too. I dunno. They bought me the VCR for my eighteenth birthday."

Billy said, "Hm."

"And for Christmas the year before."

"Wait—"

"This is third time they've given me this VCR." He looked over at Billy. He couldn't help but grin at the absurdity, though there was no joy in it. "I gave the last one to Nance."

Billy pondered this and then said, "That's a shitty secretary. I mean, *she* should at least know what present she bought for you."

Steve snorted a laugh at that. "Sometimes they just forget," Steve said. "My birthday, I mean."

"They forget your birthday?" Billy said, disbelieving. "My dad never forgets my birthday. I wish he would."

"Yeah," Steve said. "I'll bet. They just... A couple times it's happened. They remembered a few days later. Gift certificates to Eddie Bauer. It was awkward as hell."

"You don't say anything?"

"What am I supposed to say?" Steve said, pulling out the ashtray to stub out his cigarette. "Oh by the way, remember you had a son a while back? He's still here." Saying that sort of thing out loud made Steve's chest ache and he looked down at his hands. "Anyway. Forget

it. I know it could be worse.” He felt Billy’s eyes on him and wondered if he was hating Steve for bitching about it.

“Well,” Billy said. “We gonna toss this fucker or what?”

Steve stole Billy’s leather jacket and got out of the car. The VCR was in the immaculate trunk in a pretty white box. Steve picked it up and balanced it on his knee as he shut the trunk and Billy appeared in his parka. The coat looked tight on his shoulders, a cigarette hung from his mouth, his hair was a mess. Steve was startled for a second, looking at Billy standing there as it started snowing.

I like him, Steve thought, and smiled to himself. It felt like something had happened in just that moment. Billy walked up to him and leaned on the Benz. He looked *silly* in the parka, it didn’t look right on him at all with the fur collar, the hood bunched up behind him. But he was trying to seem tough as he leaned and smoked.

“You’re cute, ya know,” Steve said.

Billy said, “People don’t usually describe me as *cute*, Harrington. Even girls.”

“They’re wrong,” Steve said. He made his way to the edge of the quarry and said over his shoulder, “You’re real cute.”

At the edge of the quarry, Steve tore open the box and ripped the VCR free of its styrofoam packaging and held the shiny black miracle of electronics up by his neck.

“So,” Billy said, “are you gonna make a fuckin’ speech or-”

Steve heaved the VCR, attempting to work up some torque with his shoulders, and they watched it rotate through the air and leaned over, careful of the snow and ice, to see it plunge plunge plunge down to the ice soundlessly landing on the sea of white.

“Hmm,” Steve said.

“Good job,” Billy said. “Feel any better about it?”

Steve shrugged and said, “Yeah, not really.”

“Maybe you should punch something.”

Steve just gave him an exasperated look and Billy put up his hands in defense. “Or not.”

“Ya know, I used to feel bad my dad didn’t come to games,” Steve said. “Then I just gave up. Why bother even feeling bad. I know. It’s all really pathetic.”

“He should have,” Billy said, turning back to the view of the quarry. “You had a great season last year.”

“Eh?” Steve said. “How do you know?”

“I’ve...” He scratched his chin. “I’ve looked at all your games. Ya know. Last season you had, what, a seventeen point average? Gave me a woody just reading about it.”

“I can’t believe you know that,” Steve said, and he was probably blushing.

“I’m just saying,” Billy said. “Your dad sounds like an idiot.”

“But he never hit me,” Steve said quietly.”

“Yeah.” Billy gave him a cigarette and shivered. His eyes flitted over Steve’s face and he said, “My dad used to go at me pretty hard at me with a belt when I was a kid. So...when he gave me a fuckin’ belt for Christmas, I thought he was trying to say something. Son of a bitch probably didn’t even think of it.”

Steve didn’t know what to say to that so he kissed him, softly, trying to get some kind of point across and Billy tugged him closer by his sleeve. “Merry Christmas,” Steve said.

“Merry Christmas, pretty boy,” Billy said, smiling a little.

Steve felt a rush of affection and kissed him again, firmly, and wrapped his arms around him and they stood like that in the snow for a minute until Billy pulled back and said, “I have something for you actually.” He shook his head and said, “Fuck. I wasn’t ever gonna tell you about this. Fuck.”

“What’re you talking about?”

“I have a fucking Christmas present for you!” Billy said. “Shut up!”

“I-”

“I didn’t- I didn’t think we’d actually...It just *happened!*”

“How long have you liked me, man?”

Billy threw his head back and sighed rather dramatically. “Fuck off.”

“Well, where is it?” Steve said. “I want it.”

“It’s at school.”

“Oh.”

“But we *could* go break in,” Billy said slyly. “If you feel like it.”

Steve tipped his head. He had stolen some of his father’s stuff, absconded with his Mercedes, and then trashed the interior with truffle oil and cum. What was a little breaking and entering on top of it?

“Hell yeah,” Steve said. “Let’s go.”

In the car as they drove to the high school, Steve changed the station to pop and cranked up “Everybody Wants to Rule the World” and sang along because he knew all the words as Billy just shook his head. At a stoplight Steve scooped caviar again with his finger and held it out to Billy, wiggling his eyebrows, swaying in his seat to the music until Billy cracked a smile and sucked the caviar from Steve’s finger.

“Help me make the most of freedom and of pleasure, nothin’ ever lasts forever!” Steve sang and painted Billy’s face with his wet finger until Billy grabbed his hand and bit his wrist “Everybody wants to rule the wooorld!”

At the school Steve caught a reflection of himself in the rearview mirror wearing Billy's Metallica t-shirt, his hair destroyed by sex. He looked happy. He had not been happy at all about Christmas before Billy had shown up like some dark Metal angel. He snuck a look at Billy who was fidgeting with his Zippo, smiling in a secret childish way like he had a wonderful secret. He looked happy too.

Steve grabbed Billy's jacket and said, "Let's do this."

Breaking into Hawkins High wasn't hard. Steve knew about three different ways to do it. Once inside, when he started to head towards the lockers and Billy grabbed his arm and led him in the opposite direction, he frowned.

"Where is this thing?" Steve said.

"Shop class," Billy said.

"Breaking into shop is gonna be—"

"I have a key," Billy said, and held up his key ring. Steve noticed it had a little silver skull charm on it.

"Why do you have a key to shop?" The school was empty and it was always eerie to walk in the halls when the school was empty. It made Steve think of monsters, but he tried to ignore that.

"I kept picking the lock to hang out in there after hours," Billy said. "Just fuckin' around, making shit. Lowry finally gave up and let me have a key."

"Mr. Lowry gave you a key to shop?"

"Yeah well, he said if I got into any shit and he heard about it, he'd take it back."

"Huh." Steve nodded. "So you like shop?"

"I like working with my hands, I guess."

"It's better than punching people," Steve said.

"Yeah yeah, Harrington," Billy said, and Steve saw him go a little pink.

"Wait..." Steve said. He tugged on Billy's arm. "Wait, you *made* this?"

Billy's mouth twisted up and he turned away, leading him on down the hall.

Billy unlocked the classroom door and he had an air of owning the place as he flicked on the lights and led Steve past the line of worktables and machinery and a shelf of half-finished student projects all the way to a dusty back corner. He opened a metal cabinet with a broken door and crouched down, shuffling some boxes of crap around. He stood up holding something covered in a piece of white canvas.

"It's not a big deal or anything," Billy said quickly. "I wasn't even gonna give it to you-"

"Can I have it please?" Steve kicked his boot.

"Yeah, I guess." Billy shoved the canvas covered thing into Steve's arms, looking a little sick.

Steve shot him a smile and unwrapped his present from its covering and he lost his breath a little. He had fully expected something kind of shitty like a misshapen ashtray or a weird lamp, something that he would think was sweet as hell for the attempt. But this...

The gift was a box made of a deep reddish wood. It was about the size of a shoebox and the finish was smooth as silk and lightly stained. The lid of the box had big bold stately initials etched into it: S.H. It had brass hinges and Steve opened it to find the inside just as smooth, the corners just as sharp.

"It's beautiful," Steve murmured. "You made this for me?"

"I don't see any other S.H.'s around," Billy snapped, he'd started smoking furiously. Distantly Steve hoped they wouldn't set off an alarm. "Look, I just... I was just *making* it. For kicks. But I... Your locker door has a mirror in it with a wooden frame, alright? I got to thinking maybe you like stuff like that and I just sort of ended up

putting your initials on it. You could put cassettes in it, I guess. Or something. Weed, if you smoke weed.”

“What would you have done with it if you didn’t give it to me?”

“Burned it probably.”

“Jesus.”

“Well.” Billy shrugged.

“I love it,” Steve said.

“You don’t have to-”

“Billy,” Steve said, tracing the line of the S with his finger. “I really really love it.”

“Good,” Billy said to his feet.

They left the shop room, locking it behind them and Steve walked slowly, still struck by the craftsmanship of the box, the significance of the gift. They stepped at a floor to ceiling window that looked out at the front of the school. It had not been very long ago that Billy had first roared up in his Camaro while Steve was still with Nancy.

“Hey, what else do you know about me?” Steve said. “I mean you know my game stats and shit. You noticed the frame on my locker mirror...”

“Nothing,” Billy said, brows drawing together, clearly lying.

“Hargrove. C’mon.”

“You...” Billy rolled his eyes. “You love macaroni and cheese.”

“Well,” Steve said, “that’s true but lots of people-”

“No no no. When they serve macaroni and cheese in the cafeteria, you lose your goddamn mind.”

“Well...yeah but...they make it really good,” Steve said. He nudged Billy. “Anything else?”

"You love *Gremlins*. Math is your best subject. Which probably isn't saying much. You pretend Tears for Fears is your favorite band, but I think it's probably Hall and Oates. You know way too many lines from *Caddyshack*. You get a knot in your lower back at practice and your shirt rides up when you massage it and it drives me fucking insane. French toast makes you angry for some reason? You doodle a cartoon dog who wears sunglasses when you're really bored. *Very* dorky, Harrington. *Ordinary People* made you cry like a bitch. And the reason I kissed you at the party was because I saw snowflakes on your fucking eyelashes and I've never..." Billy took a deep breath and glared at Steve. "This has *never* happened to me! Do you understand?"

"Yeah," Steve said, blinking at him. "How did you know about *Ordinary People*? I've never told anyone that, not even Nancy."

"I didn't," Billy said. "You just told me about your parents and I guessed."

"Wait, *you've* seen *Ordinary People*?"

"Just the poster."

"Dick," Steve said, and punched his shoulder. "Man... You already know more about me than my dad."

"His loss," Billy said. He didn't say it as if he was even trying to make Steve feel better but as if it were an obvious fact.

Steve ducked his head, clutching the wooden box to his chest.. "Listen... I wish I had something for you too. I know, like why would I have something but... I wish I did."

"Harrington," Billy said softly.

"Yeah..."

"This is the best Christmas I've ever had," Billy said.

Steve wanted to see what snowflakes on his eyelashes looked like.

Steve kissed him and said, "Come to the gym."

“What’s in the gym?”

“You getting a blowjob. Then we should sneak into the showers because we're still disgusting.”

“Goddamn. A gym blowjob? And you say you have nothing for me?”

“Well, you were right,” Steve said. “I like things made of wood.”